

# Arnold's heroics cap off up-and-down week with win at No.6 East Hall

By Todd Forrest  
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The Lady Panthers won two-of-three last week with the lone loss coming at defending State runner-up Monticello in the Region 8-AA opener.

Union County (6-4, 0-1) dismantled Towns County, 15-1 on Monday but left their bats in Blairsville on Thursday when they fell 6-0 at Monticello.

The Lady Hurricanes scored three in the first and one in the second before holding Union to just one single over the final three innings.

**Lady Panthers 7, East Hall 4** - Trailing 4-3 with the bases loaded in the top of the seventh, senior Aladriel Arnold belted the first pitch over the left field fence and into the parking lot, giving Union County the lead for good.

Arnold finished the game 2-for-3 with two homers while driving in six of her team's seven runs.

Sophomore pitcher Trinity Queen, who replaced junior Megan Bright in the fifth, recorded her third win of the year with 2.2 innings of no-hit softball.

In the early going, one bunt single was all the Lady Panthers could muster over the first three innings as the contest remained scoreless into the fourth.

"There's no clock in softball and no buzzer that will stop the game so you just have to keep grinding," Union County Head Coach Stephen Mitchell said after the win.

With one down in the fourth, Arnold went the other way on a fastball up in the zone, lifting the pitch high and deep to right-centerfield. Her second home run of the year gave Union County a 1-0 lead and ended the scoreless streak at 11.1 innings.

"Hitting is a difficult thing," Mitchell said. "You can hit .300 (in Major League Baseball) and still go to the hall of fame. That's getting out 7-of-10 times so it's a difficult thing to do. We kept grinding and I'm



Aladriel Arnold watches as her go-ahead grand slam sails over the left field fence during the seventh inning at East Hall. Photo/Todd Forrest

proud of them; (East Hall) is a good ball team.

The lead quickly evaporated when the Lady Vikings responded with three singles and a double in the bottom half of the fourth to take a 3-1 advantage into the fifth.

With two down and the bases loaded, Arnold returned to the plate and battled to an 11-pitch walk that pulled the Lady Panthers within a run at 3-2.

A leadoff walk and a one-out double tacked on an East Hall insurance run in the bottom of the fifth. Queen replaced Bright and induced a fly out and a called strike three, keeping Union within two runs at 4-2.

Both teams would go down 1-2-3 in the sixth and the Lady Panthers trailed by two in their final at bat.

Freshman Caley Davis drew a leadoff walk, Maddie Sutton reached when the Lady Vikings failed to get the lead runner at second, and Queen walked to load the bases.

Mary Wischmeyer scored

Davis with an opposite field single, bringing Arnold to the dish with the bases loaded.

Arnold would crush her second grand slam of the month, becoming the first Lady Panther since Laken Chambers in 2013 to smack a go-ahead grand slam in her team's final at bat.

East Hall would go down in-order as Queen retired the No. 2, 3, and 4 hitters during the bottom half of the seventh.

"We take pride in the fact that we can use 16-to-18 kids and still have a chance (to win)," Mitchell said. "We're trying to build depth by platooning people and moving them around, so when that day comes, they're not shocked."

"I've got some great assistant coaches that help me and keep us prepared for all situations."

Sutton and Wischmeyer recorded two hits each while freshman Lexi Sisum finished 1-for-3 with a run.

Syler Ludlum went 1-for-4, Madeline Tanner walked



Senior Skyler Ludlum is hitting .407 with 9 runs and 8 RBIs. Her one strike-out in 33 plate appearances is also best on the team. Photo/Todd Forrest

and scored a run, and Davis walked twice and scored.

Bright worked 4.1 innings, allowing 7 hits, 3 walks, and four runs.

**Lady Panthers 0, Monticello 6** - The Lady Hurricanes jumped out to a 4-0 lead after two innings and never looked back as Union County was shutout in the Region 8-AA opener.

"We didn't play that bad against Monticello, we just had 10 fly ball outs and you can't beat good teams like that," Coach Mitchell said. "I told the girls after the game that I didn't know if I should feel hopeful or embarrassed. We're better than how we performed but we still kept it close."

The Lady Panthers left two runners in scoring position in the first following an Arnold double and a Ludlum single.

Monticello scored three in the first -- all coming with two outs -- thanks to four singles off Queen. An error cost Union a run in the second as the Lady

Canes made it a 4-0 game.

Sutton led off the third with a bunt single, Hannah Patton reached on a two-out base hit in the fourth, and Arnold was hit by a pitch in the sixth but the Lady Panthers were unable to get on the board.

Monticello put things out of reach in the sixth with two singles followed by a two-out, two-run Union County error that made it a 6-0 game.

Patton singled to lead off the seventh to finish 2-for-3. Ludlum and Sutton went 1-for-3, Arnold was 1-for-2.

Queen gave up 10 hits and three earned runs during six innings in the circle.

"They're working hard, doing what we ask them to do, and I'm proud of them, we just have a lot of things to work on," Mitchell said.

**Lady Panthers 15, Towns County 1 (4 inn)** - For the second time in five days, Union County dismantled the Lady Indians in a run-rule shortened affair.

Towns County is still without its ace Kennedy Henson, who suffered torn knee ligaments during basketball season and is unavailable to pitch until some time in September.

As a result, the short-handed Lady Indians have been forced to rely on junior varsity pitching until Henson returns to the circle.

After Towns missed a golden opportunity with two runners in scoring position in the first, the Lady Panthers scored 14 runs bottom half of the inning - 13 coming before the first out.

Towns scored one in the second but Union got that run back in their half of the inning.

Junior Krysten Hodges went 2-for-2 with 3 RBIs and Ludlum finished 2-for-2 with 2 RBIs.

Arnold and Wischmeyer each went 1-for-1 with 2 runs and 2 RBIs. Davis ended up 1-for-3 with 2 runs, while Patton and Tanner each finished 1-for-2 with an RBI.

Sutton singled and scored, Queen singled, Ansley Collins and Miranda Lockably both drove in a run.

Anna Roxbury scored twice and Rebekah Kelly scored once.

Bright picked up her second win, striking out six and walking five during four no-hit innings.

Union County returns to region-play when they host Elbert County on Tuesday and visit Putnam County on Thursday.

**Injury update** - Senior Bailey Rayfield injured her ankle prior to the Aug. 16 Lumpkin County game and will miss a few more weeks, according to Mitchell.

Prior to the injury, Rayfield was hitting .429 with 6 RBIs and 6 runs through six games.

In Union's six games with Rayfield in the lineup, the Lady Panthers were hitting .361 as a team. In the four games since, their batting average has dipped to .277. Although, the level of competition has increased over the past two weeks.

## Union County Cross Country opens 2018 with clean sweep at Meeks Park

By Todd Forrest  
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For the ladies, it was more of the same from Zoe Sanchez; in the guys race, Luke Gambrell proved that moving on from Lance Underwood might be a little easier than expected.

"I knew we would do well, but we did better than I thought," Union County Cross Country Coach Paige Dyer said afterwards. "They gave a good, strong showing today. Some of it could be the home course but they're also just very hungry. Four of my top-four boys didn't run varsity or weren't on the team last year. They've just been working really hard."

First place Gambrell and third place Steven Seiler paced Union County to a 70-point victory over second place Fannin County.

"I'm glad to be back out there competing, I'm looking forward to the next race and getting ready for state," Gambrell said after receiving his first place medal.

Meanwhile, Sanchez ran away from the field with a time of 21:52 as the Lady Panthers also dominated - finishing with 35 points, 44 better than second place Fannin County.

"I'm happy to be back competing but my only worry is that this year won't live up to

my expectations," Sanchez said after the race.

"I'm hoping to break into the 19's (minute-range)," she added when asked to elaborate on her expectations. "Even though I ran a 22 today, I'm hoping to improve because last year I ran a 24 on this course so if I keep improving, I hope to get a 19:30."

Latty Ryals placed fourth with a time of 23:25, Sadie Underwood clocked in at 24:24, Lexie Ochoa ran a 24:59, and Jessie Holbrook turned in a 27:40 to round out Union's top five.

As for the boys, Gambrell's 18:20 was first and Seiler crossed the finish line third at 19:37. Hunter Hartzog checked in at 20:02, Thomas Allison finished in 20:21 and

Meachi Patrick ran a 20:40.

"I felt pretty good and I just gave it all I had at the end," Gambrell said when asked about his time of 18:20. "(Running) up that mountain is always a killer and I knew I had to gun it on the downhill and give it my best."

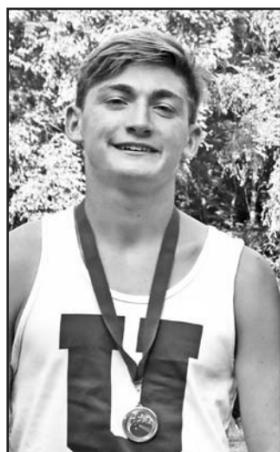
My goal is to get (my times) into the 17's (minute range) and eventually go for Lance (Underwood's) record," he added.

Up next for Union County is Chestatee's War Eagle Invitational on Tuesday, which is always brings out the top programs in North Georgia.

"There will be a lot of big-name competition at Chestatee so it'll be interesting to see how we stack up," Dyer said.



Zoe Sanchez



Luke Gambrell

## Local Racing Report: Blue Ridge and Tri-County

By Blake Lynch  
Staff Writer  
North Georgia News

Tri-County Racetrack hosted its annual Back-to-School Nickel Night on Friday. Here are the top five from each class.

Front Wheel Drive - Coming in first place was No. Q2 Jim Exum. Coming in second place was No. J-3 Josh Deese. No. 74 DJ Worley came in third place. Finishing in fourth place was No. 104 James Queen. Coming fifth place was No. 21 Stephen Godfrey

Beginner 602- Coming in first place was No. 35 Dillon Daves. Coming in second place was No. 108 Allison Southard. Coming in third place was No. 56J Jason Berrong. Finishing fourth place was No. 77 Hunter Toomey. Coming in fifth place was No. 2 Randy Roberts.

Pony- Coming in first place was No. 02 Justin Taylor. Com-

ing in second place was No. 32 Franklin Burk. Finishing in third place was No. 15 Ryan Crawford. Finishing in fourth place was No. 8 Johnny McClure. Coming in fifth place was No. 43 Tain Ross.

Crate Late Models- Coming in first place was No. 7 Jason Deal. Finishing second place was No. 200 Jacob Anderson. Coming in third place was No. 12 Drew Deaver. Coming in fourth place was No. 17 Brett Shook. Finishing fifth place was No. 22 Jamison Early.

Modified Street- Coming in first place was No. 34 Greg Southard. Coming in second place was No. 5 Kenny Taylor. Coming in third place was No. 45 Brandon Elliott. Finishing in fourth place was No. 48 Colton Stroud. Coming in fifth place was No. 81 John Howard.

Street Stock- Coming in first place was No. 14 Charles Devine Jr. Coming in second place was No. 05 Micheal Harper.

Coming in third place was No. 51 Robert Keener. Coming in fourth place was No. 01 Jacob Lynch. Finishing in fifth place was No. 7D Dylan Truhan

Blue Ridge Outlaw Late Models - Coming in first place was No. 8 David Payne. Coming in second place was No. 4H Levi Hicks. No. 12 Daniel Wilson came in third place. Coming in fourth place was No. 1w Ricky Weeks. No. 20j Johnthan Jennings.

Blue Ridge Motorsports Park hosted a Saturday race. Here's the top five from each class: Hot-Shots - Coming in first place was No. 22 Tucker Anderson. Finishing in second place was No. 30 Maddox Hughes. Finishing in third place was No. J-3 Franklin Burk Jr.

Street Stock- Coming in first place was No. 9 Jim Twigg. Finishing in second place was No. 14 Charles Devine Jr. Coming in third place was J-69 Jim Weller. Coming in fourth place

## Volleyball: Union County wins its first varsity set in program history

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Union County Volleyball won a set during its match with Gilmer last Thursday.

Gilmer would go on to take the next three sets but the 25-22 set one victory marks the first time the varsity squad was victorious in a single set.

Last year, the C-Team won a set vs Tellico Plains, Tennessee.

In the match vs Gilmer, the Lady Bobcats took set two 25-11, set three 25-13, and set four 25-17.

Freshman Riley Allison recorded two kills and junior Adelia Pyle had 28 digs, one kill and an ace.

Junior Jordan Swanson also recorded an ace.

Freshman Maci Williams had 18 blocks and senior Kaiya Wilkes had two. Freshman Molly Kay West had 12 digs.

On Monday, Union lost in straight sets to Andrews, North Carolina (25-17, 25-14, 25-18).

Williams had three kills and senior Delanie Skinner had two kills and 13 digs.

Allison recorded a pair of aces and 8 digs; Pyle led the way with 18 digs.

Union County hosted Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina on Monday before traveling to Fannin County on Tuesday.



Union celebrates its first set victory over Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Adelia Pyle serves against Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Youth football opens 2018 season

By Blake Lynch  
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North Georgia News

The Union County Recreation Department football teams traveled to Gilmer County and both teams suffered a loss.

The 9&U Panthers went into halftime tied at 6-6. No. 31 Kevin Kilpatrick scored the only touchdown for the Panthers as the final score ended up Gilmer 12, Union 6.

The 11&U Union County team lost to Gilmer 28-12.

No. 15 Cade Dockrey scored the two touchdowns to lead the Panthers.

The Players of the Week for August 25 are as follows:

For the 9&U Panthers, No. 48 Gunter Franklin

receives the honors as he played despite suffering a foot injury.

For the 11&U Panthers No. #15 Cade Dockrey is this week's recipient.

Dockrey scored the only two touchdowns for the Panthers in their loss to Gilmer.

